

# Harmony of the Gospels

My thanks to Charlie Orth for  
this teaching. --Pastor Larry

Healing of the demonized boy and unbelief rebuked. Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43a

- Jesus had given the disciples authority over unclean spirits when He sent them out two by two. Mark 6:7
- They did cast out many demons at that time. Mark 6:13
- Scribes were likely questioning and arguing to gather evidence against Jesus and His disciples.
- Perhaps the disciples had mistakenly believed that somehow they now had the power within themselves to do these works. Jesus' rebuke and explanation to them would seem to support this.

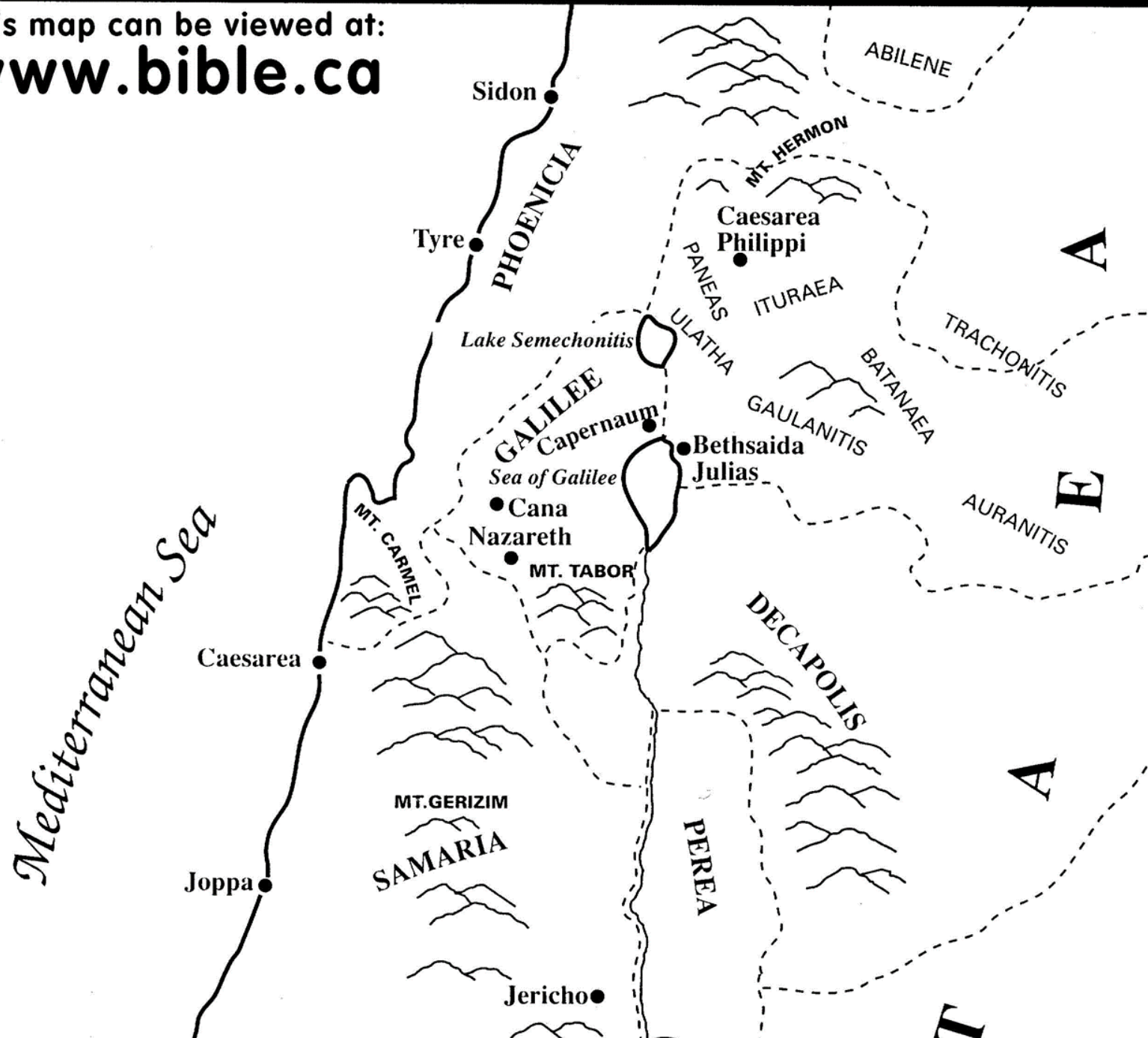
Healing of the demonized boy and unbelief rebuked. Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43a

- We can criticize the disciples for this prideful attitude, but how often do we depend on our “strengths” and “abilities” instead of trusting only in His power and wisdom to accomplish His works.
- Our faith is in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the place where Jesus brought the father of the boy before granting his request to heal his son.
- Can we all say “I believe; help my unbelief?”
- This does not mean that all epilepsy and other such conditions and diseases are caused by demons.

## Second prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43b-45

- First prediction was in or near Caesarea Philippi, when Peter rebuked Jesus.
- Jesus was always teaching His disciples, by words and examples.
- As His disciples, we need to be constantly disciplined and to disciple others.
- Matthew 17:23 states that they were filled with grief. Peter did not rebuke Him this time.

This map can be viewed at:  
[www.bible.ca](http://www.bible.ca)



# Payment of the Temple Tax

## Matthew 17:24-27;

- King's sons do not pay taxes, Jesus, as God's Son, is exempt from paying God's tax, the temple tax; however, His time had not yet come, so He paid the tax so as not to offend or to give more ammunition to His critics.
- Peter, soon to be a brethren of Jesus (Romans 8:29) would also be exempt but should pay it for the same reason.
- This demonstration of humility in front of Peter was accompanied by another miracle demonstrating His unique power over nature and His supernatural access to provisions.
- This lesson in humility was apparently lost on His disciples as we go to the next event.

# Rivalry over greatness in the kingdom

Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9; 46-48

- They were headed toward Jerusalem where they believed Jesus would establish His kingdom and restore Israel.
- Three of the disciples had an apparently closer relationship with Jesus than the others.
- Their culture was very precedence and rank oriented. The world was greatly influencing them, despite having been exposed to the words and examples of humility by Jesus for about 2½ years.

# Rivalry over greatness in the kingdom

Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48

- This concept of being a servant to others to be first was like a foreign language to them. The high status of the Pharisees and other religious leaders, the double portions of inheritance of the eldest son, and the low status of household servants did not line up with Jesus' teaching.
- Children were at the bottom of the social ladder – no rights whatsoever. Verse 37 can best be illustrated in Matthew 25:31-46 “... Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even to the least of them, you did it to me.”



# Warning against causing believers to sin

Matthew 18:6-14; Mark 9:38-50; Luke 9:49-50

- Jesus pulls no punches here in regard to causing believers, especially children, to sin. This “heavy” millstone is one that would have to be pulled by a donkey.
- Jesus is not teaching self-mutilation here. This is an example of hyperbole used by Jesus to drive home a point; that being to hate our own sin so as to deal with it as drastically as necessary.
- In this context “little ones” could be just children or could also include young believers, who have become like and believe like children. We’ll go with just children.

# Warning against causing believers to sin

Matthew 18:6-14; Mark 9:38-50; Luke 9:49-50

- Seems clear here that children have guardian angels, who continually see the face of God.
- The parable of the lost sheep reflects Jesus' main point in this entire passage – that every child, every person is precious to God.

# Treatment of a sinning brother

## Matthew 18:15-20

- Some early writings omit “against you,” but with or without the phrase, this proper action should be taken while following the cautions in Galatians 6:1-3.
- Deuteronomy 19:15 “... on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”
- Step three should not be an open interrogation and trial during a Sunday worship service. It should be a meeting with church leadership.

# Treatment of a sinning brother

## Matthew 18:15-20

- Many commentaries adhere to the position that “... let him be to you as a Gentile and tax collector” means to throw him out of the church. It could come to that under extreme circumstances, but it should even then be with the intent of restoration.
- His actions and resistance to truth may indicate that he is not a believer. He needs then to be evangelized.
- We are servants of the truth, not the source. We as a church or an individual do not have the authority to allow what God has not allowed nor to limit what God has not limited.

# Treatment of a sinning brother

## Matthew 18:15-20

- Need to keep verse 18 in view as we read verses 19 and 20.
- There are promises for the church body in praying for the same thing and for seeking discernment and direction for His will.

# Forgiveness

## Matthew 18:21-35

- Peter probably thought he would get an “atta-boy” from Jesus for his generosity, as the religious leaders taught that a person could be forgiven three times, but not the fourth time.
- The Greek can be read “seventy times seven” or “seventy seven”. Either way these complete numbers were Jesus’ way of introducing forgiveness with no limits.
- The debts of the two servants compare to about \$50 million vs \$8 thousand

# Forgiveness

## Matthew 18:21-35

- This parable is often allegorized resulting in “... a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words...” (1 Timothy 6:4)
- This parable has one main truth to convey – that when we have received God’s forgiveness (a debt we have could never repay) He expects and empowers us to forgive others in the same way.